

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 OMB-01 /069 W  
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P R 020755Z JAN 76  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5404  
INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 006

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, TC  
SUBJ: STILL NO UAE CABINET

REF: 76 ABU DHABI 3234 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FOR THE PAST MONTH SINCE ABU DHABI RULER SHAIKH ZAYID WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UAE FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEAR TERM, EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW FEDERAL CABINET HAVE BEEN UNAVAILING. DISPUTE IS ESSENTIALLY ONE OF WHETHER THERE WILL BE A CABINET COMPOSED OF TECHNOCRATS WHICH IS WHAT ZAYID AND YOUNGER RULERS WANT OR ONE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM DIFFERENT TRADITIONAL FAMILY GROUPS WHICH IS WHAT SHAIKH RASHID OF DUBAI WANTS. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ABU DHABI RULER SHAIKH ZAYID HAD AGREED TO SERVE AND HAD BEEN RE-ELECTED BY OTHER  
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RULERS FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEAR TERM ON DECEMBER 1 (REFTEL), THE FEDERATION IS STILL WITHOUT A NEW CABINET. ORIGINALLY, IT HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED THAT CABINET WOULD BE NAMED ON DECEMBER 12, WHEN UAE CELEBRATED ITS NATIONAL HOLIDAY (POSTPONED TEN DAYS BECAUSE DECEMBER 2 FELL DURING THE IID AL ADHA). ON DECEMBER 10, AFTER A SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS, IT HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT SHAIKH MAKTUM BIN RASHID, SON OF SHAIKH RASHID OF DUBAI AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER, HAD BEEN DESIGNATED AGAIN AS PM AND ASKED, OSTENSIBLY WITH A FREE HAND, TO FORM A NEW CABINET. PREVIOUS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN APPOINTED BY SEVEN RULERS

OF EMIRATES ACCORDING TO A FORMULA REFLECTING SIZE AND WEIGHT OF EACH EMIRATES WITH ABU DHABI HAVING 11 OF 29 CABINET POSITIONS, DUBAI SEVEN, SHARJAH FOUR, AJMAN, RAS AL KHAIMAH AND UMM AL QAIWAIN TWO EACH AND FUJAIRAH ONE. UNDER RECENT ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT AMONG RULERS, MAKTUM WAS TO HAVE AUTHORITY TO CHOOSE A NEW TEAM WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF THE RULERS. TO AVOID HAVING THE PREVIOUS LARGE AND UNWIELDLY FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY, NUMBER OF CABINET POSITIONS WERE TO BE CUT TO 16 AND SEVERAL MINISTRIES (ELECTRICITY AND WATER, HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING, YOUTH AND SPORTS) EITHER ABOLISHED WITH THEIR FUNCTIONS TAKEN OVER BY INDIVIDUAL EMIRATES OR INCORPORATED INTO OTHER FEDERAL MINISTRIES.

3. SHORTLY AFTER BEING DESIGNATED AS PM, MAKTUM PREPARED A LIST OF CANDIDATES WHICH WOULD HAVE ASSUMED A GOVERNMENT OF TECHNOCRATES ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE EFFICIENT SERVICES. BUT MAKTUM QUICKLY RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS FATHER, SHAIKH RASHID OF DUBAI, WHO IS ALSO UAE VICE PRESIDENT. ALTHOUGH FROM ALL ACCOUNTS ZAYID AND YOUNGER RULERS OF FEDERATION SUPPORTED MAKTUM, RASHID STEADFASTLY OPPOSED ANY CHANGE FROM "THE OLD FEUDAL SYSTEM" AS CROWN PRINCE SHAIKH HUMAID OF AJMAN PUT IT TO ME OTHER DAY. RASHID FELT THAT GOVERNMENT OF TECHNOCRATS WOULD BITE INTO HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION. HE ALSO TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION TO SOME OF CHOICES FROM CABINET POSTS ZEROING IN PRIMARILY ON FONMIN SUWAIDI WHOM RASHID FEELS HAS BROUGHT IN TOO MANY FOREIGN ADVISORS, IS TOO IDENTIFIED  
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WITH ARAB NATIONALIST CAUSES, AND IS TOO LIBERAL IN DISBURSING UAE WEALTH TO MENDICANT ARAB NATIONS. AT ONE TIME, IT HAD BEEN PROPOSED APPOINTING SUWAIDI AS DEPUTY PM (MAKING SAIF GHUBBASH FONMIN), AND REMOVING SHAIKH HAMDAN (WHO HAS BEEN TARNISHED BY CHARGES OF KICKBACKS IN HIS MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS), SHAIKH SAIF (WHO HAS DONE A POOR JOB OF RUNNING THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH) AND SHAIKH AHMAD (WHO HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR OVERGROWN BUREAUCRACY IN HIS MINISTRY OF INFORMATION). THESE WERE TO BE REPLACED BY EDUCATED UAE NATIONALS, WITH UAE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON SAID GHUBBASH AND UAE AMBBASSADOR IN CAIRO TARIUM UMRAN BEING AMONG THE CANDIDATES.

4. AFTER INCONCLUSIVE EFFORTS AND INTIMIDATED BY HIS FATHER, MAKTUM MET WITH ZAYID AND RASHID ON DECEMBER 16 TO TENDER HIS RESIGNATION STATING HE DID NOT WANT TO BE PM IF HIS DECISIONS WERE GOING TO BE QUESTIONED. HIS RESIGNATION WAS NOT ACCEPTED AND ACTIVE CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY EVER SINCE TO TRY TO FIND A POLITICAL COMPROMISE. IN THE PROCESS, ZAYID HAS HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH AHDIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH, WHO ALSO HEADS UAE COMMITTEE PREPARING FEDERAL BUDGET (SEE SEPTEL). SULTAN TOLD ME WHEN I MET WITH HIM ON DECEMBER 29 THAT HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY ZAYID TO BECOME THE PM. WHILE HE THOUGHT HE COULD HANDLE THE JOB, SULTAN

HAD TOLD ZAYID HE WOULD PREFER TO DEVOTE HIS FULL TIME TO GOVERNING SHARJAH. BESIDES, IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO CONSIDER HIM SINCE RASHID WAS SURE TO OPPOSE. SULTAN, WHO WAS TO SEE ZAYID AGAIN THE FOLLOWING DAY, EXPECTED TO BE APPROACHED ONCE MORE SINCE THERE HAD BEEN ANOTHER INCONCLUSIVE MEETING PREVIOUS DAY (DEC. 28) WITH MAKTUM TO FORM A CABINET. SULTAN FEELS MAKTUM IS WELL MEANING BUT IS NOT FORCEFUL NOR IS HE A GOOD ADMINISTRATOR. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT SEE ANY SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE CANDIDATE AT MOMENT WHO RASHID WOULD NOT VETO.

5. THE ABSENCE OF A FEDERAL CABINET HAS NOT YET BECOME  
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A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR GOVERNING OF FEDERATION. EMIRATES STILL FUNCTION PRETTY MUCH ON THEIR OWN. ALTHOUGH MANY CABINET MEMBERS HAVE TAKEN OPPORTUNITY TO GO ON EXTENDED LEAVE, BUDGET COMMITTEE HAS BEEN MEETING REGULARLY AND HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF DECISIONS ON ONGOING DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS (SEE SEPTTEL). THIS COMMITTEE WHICH ALSO INCLUDES RULER OF FUJAIRAH SHAIKH HAMAD, AJMAN DEPUTY RULER SHAIKH HUMAID, MINISTER FINANCE SHAIKH HAMDAN, MIN PLANNING AL-KINDI, MINISTER COMMUNICATIONS AL-MULLA, MINISTER EDUCATION TARIUM, AND MIN STATE FOR INFORMATION AFFAIRS AL-GHAITH, HAS BEEN WORKING AS A SORT OF MINI CABINET. HOWEVER, THE DELAY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EMBARRASING TO UAE PRESIDENT SHAIKH ZAYID. IT HAS CRIMPED HIS PLANS TO LEAVE ON DECEMBER 24 FOR PAKISTAN TO HUNT BUSTARD WITH HIS FALCONS, SOMETHING ZAYID ALWAYS DOES AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. ZAYID HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT AND MAY DECIDE TO TAKE MATTERS IN HIS OWN HANDS AND APPOINT A CABINET.

6. COMMENT: THE CURRENT SITUATION IS ANOTHER REFLECTION OF THE TEST OF WILLS BETWEEN ZAYID AND RASHID AND BETWEEN THE INFLUENTIAL TRADITIONAL FAMILY GROUPINGS WHO WANT REPRESENTATION AND BETTER EDUCATED CITIZENS WHO IDENTIFY MORE WITH UAE AS A COUNTRY AND WHO WANT TO MOVE TOWARD A MORE EFFECTIVE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. AT THIS STAGE, UAE FEDERATION IS PROBABLY STILL TOO WEEK TO ALLOW FORMATION OF STRONG FEDERAL CABINET AND PUSHING TOO HARD AT THIS TIME COULD IMPAIR FURTHER ADHESION AMONG EMIRATES. BUT REGARDLESS OF WHAT FINALLY EVENTUATES, ONE RULER WHO CAN BE EXPECTED TO GAIN IN STATURE IS SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH. WHILE SHARJAH DOES NOT HAVE ABU DHABI'S OR EVEN DUABI'S OIL REVENUES, IT HAS SEEN AN INCREDIBLY RAPID DEVELOPMENT FINANCED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY FOREIGN CAPITAL WHICH HAS BEEN ATTRACTED BY SHARJAH'S EXTERMELY LIBERAL CONDITIONS. SULTAN, A CONSCIENTIOUS WORKER, IS ON OF THE TWO RULERS WITH FORMAL EFUCATION AND IS CONVINCED THAT UNTRAMELED FREE ENTERPRISE IS ONLY ECONOMIC SYSTEM THAT MAKES SENSE. HE IS PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY  
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IMPORTANT ROLE AND COULD HAVE A GOOD CHANCE TO SUCCEED  
ZAYID AS NEXT UAE PRESIDENT FIVE YEARS FROM NOW IF HIS  
DEVELOPMENT PLANS MEET TEST OF TIME. MEANWHILE, THE  
OTHER BENEFICIARY IS THE BUSTARD WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO  
CONTEND WITH ZAYID'S FALCONS CHAISING AFTER HIM.  
DICKMAN

SECRET

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## Message Attributes

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